

One of those officers was Officer Eugene Goodman. Officer Goodman is a U.S. Army veteran who was raised right here in the District of Columbia, not far from where we are gathered. He saw combat in the Iraq war, fighting with the 101st Airborne Division, until he returned home and signed up to serve with the Capitol Police in 2009.

He had shown valor in uniform previously—that was in a war zone—and I am certain that Officer Goodman never imagined that he would be called on to fight a battle to defend our Constitution in the U.S. Capitol, not far from his own backyard. Just outside these doors, Officer Goodman distracted the mob and helped to save 100 U.S. Senators and many of our staff members from harm, as well as Members of the House of Representatives and their staff too.

The brave men and women of law enforcement, like Officer Goodman, put their lives on the line that day to protect not just the Members of Congress inside the House and Senate Chambers but our very Constitution.

Ultimately, the insurrectionists and the former President failed to overturn the election because Democrats, Republicans, and a Republican Vice President, Michael Pence, returned to the House and Senate Chambers. After order was restored, we did not accept mob rule; instead, we certified the votes of millions of Americans because that is what our democracy and our allegiance to it demanded of us.

We have learned a lot over the past year that puts that day into better context. There is still much to learn. But January 6 was far from a random event. It was a premeditated, coordinated, and, in the end, violent effort to overturn an election. In other countries, we would call this an attempted coup.

One year later, I am alarmed and appalled by the attempts to rewrite the history of January 6 as a peaceful protest. These conspiracy theories and lies continue to fuel the same misinformation and hatred that led to January 6.

Colleagues, we need to lead by our example. We must choose truth over the Big Lie. We must choose the Constitution over the mob. We must choose the rule of law and mutual respect for one another over hatred and division.

Thomas Jefferson once said—this is a paraphrase, but something along these lines—he said: If the people know the truth, they won't make a mistake.

I love that. If the people know the truth, they won't make a mistake.

Well, we returned that day to this very Chamber to certify the votes of millions of Americans because we wanted the American people to know the truth: Joe Biden and KAMALA HARRIS won the 2020 election fair and square. We must now make sure that every American knows the unvarnished truth related to January 6.

Over the past several years, I have mentioned time and again the wisdom

of the Framers of our Constitution. In the hot summer of 1787, they gathered and debated a new form of government, a constitutional republic with an intricate system of checks and balances. Little did they know that that document, first ratified by Delaware, would become the longest running experiment in democracy that the world has ever known.

I have sworn an oath no fewer than 12 times to protect the Constitution of our country: first as a 17-year-old Navy ROTC midshipman at Ohio State; 4 years later when I was commissioned as an ensign in the Navy to become a naval flight officer during the Vietnam war; again as I relinquished my regular commission and assumed a Reserve commission; and then another, gosh, eight times as a House Member and here as a Senator. We have a sacred obligation to protect our Constitution from enemies both foreign and domestic.

In his second inaugural address at the end of the Civil War, President Lincoln addressed a deeply divided nation. All told, more than 600,000 Americans would die in the bloodiest conflict in our Nation's history. Still, President Lincoln called on the Nation to come together, to bind up our wounds, and to begin to heal. I believe that these words, which were etched inside the Lincoln Memorial just a few miles from where we gather today, can guide our Nation in this moment.

Colleagues, in order to truly bind up our wounds related to January 6 and heal a deeply divided nation, we must continue seeking the truth and holding those responsible to account. More than 700 individuals have already been charged with crimes related to the attack on our Capitol.

Moreover, the bipartisan House Select Committee must finish its important work that it has begun and provide us with the facts of that day and the days that preceded it. Armed with those facts, many of us who serve in this Congress must make sure that the American people know the truth and that everyone responsible for the plotting, for the planning, and for the execution of an attempt to overturn an election in the United States of America is held accountable to the fullest extent of the law. Our democracy demands no less.

Thank you.

I yield the floor at this time to my colleague from Texas.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Texas.

ELECTION SECURITY

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, earlier this week, the majority leader sent a letter to our Democratic colleagues, which has been widely distributed in the press even though he didn't send it to folks on this side of the aisle. We have all now had a chance to read it. He has outlined what the next few weeks on the Senate floor might look like.

Now that the so-called Build Back Better—or what some have called the

reckless tax-and-spending spree—bill has been sidelined due to lack of support, Senator SCHUMER has shifted his focus to another dangerous and unnecessary bill. This time, rather than an attempt to spend trillions of dollars and to raise taxes on the American people, he is proposing that we overhaul the very foundation of our democracy.

Our colleagues on the Democratic side don't trust their own State legislators to pass voting laws that are in compliance with the Voting Rights Act and the laws of the land. The reason I say that, as shocking as it may sound, is, why in the world would they want to preempt their own State voting laws by passing a national law which would, under the supremacy clause of the U.S. Constitution, preempt their own State laws? Well, this power grab would give the Federal Government unprecedented power to make decisions about how elections are run in all 50 States.

This isn't the first time our friends across the aisle have shown an interest in hijacking America's elections. We have seen various versions before, each one relying on a slightly different marketing strategy. At one point, it was touted as a necessity of election security. Then, when that didn't work, they said: Well, this is about instilling in the voters confidence in our election laws. Then, when they failed to muster the political support necessary to pass that bill, they tried to figure out another way to sell it, and they said: Well, really what we need to do is remove obstacles that prevent people from voting.

Well, the 2020 election saw an unprecedented turnout. In my State, there were 11.3 million people who cast their ballots. Hispanics, African Americans, and other minorities voted in historically high numbers. Sixty-six percent of registered voters in Texas voted in the 2020 election, making it the highest voter turnout in 120 years when you look across the great expanse of this country. So now our colleagues across the aisle are going to have to come up with a new sales pitch.

As we know, in the wake of the 2020 election and concerns about some of the irregularities in those various States, States have passed legislation to make it easier to vote and harder to cheat. I can't imagine why we wouldn't all embrace that approach: Make it easier to vote and harder to cheat.

Senator SCHUMER has described these State laws as "reprehensible" and "the most sweeping attack on the right to vote since the beginning of Jim Crow." Based on those extraordinary statements, you might think that the States have restored literacy tests. You might think the disgusting and subjective determination of "good moral character" before someone was allowed to vote—the kind of prohibitions that existed after the Civil War—had been reinstated.

The truth is different than Senator SCHUMER would portray. Many of these

changes in State laws were designed to reduce opportunities for fraud or roll back temporary protocols that were put in place during the pandemic.

The new Texas law, for example, requires voting systems to be tested before an election is held to ensure there are no technical difficulties. It is not unheard of that voting machines break or need to be repaired. That just makes sense.

The new Texas law also requires that voter rolls be kept up-to-date; in other words, people who are no longer alive—their names would be removed from the voter rolls.

Texas is no stranger to voting irregularities. In fact, the story of Box 13 in Jim Wells County, TX, was supposedly the reason why Lyndon Baines Johnson beat Coke Stevenson in the race for the U.S. Senate many, many years ago. Strangely enough, the votes on the voting rolls tended to go through the local cemetery and go in alphabetical order, providing LBJ the votes he needed in order to beat Coke Stevenson in that election. So removing dead voters from the voter rolls strikes me as a pretty good idea.

Other changes the State legislature made in Texas expanded voting access. We already offer 2 weeks of early voting in person, and the new law didn't make any changes to that, but it did extend voting hours in more than 60 Texas counties and clarified that voters who were in line at the polling place before polls closed will still be able to cast their ballots.

The Texas law was not the only one to actually improve voter access. Georgia, for example, expanded early voting in person to 17 days, which is more generous than what is offered in many Democrat States.

In New Jersey, by contrast, early voting only lasts 9 days—9 days in New Jersey, 17 days in Georgia. Has the Attorney General sued New Jersey for somehow suppressing the right to vote? No, he hasn't. He has sued Georgia, and he has sued Texas. And I will make a prediction right here today that he will lose both of those lawsuits because the facts simply don't support the litigation.

If you are from New York, you have 10 days before early voting in order to cast your ballot—less than you see in Georgia and Texas.

And this year, for the first time in President Biden's home State of Delaware, you can have 10 days before election day in which to cast your ballot. Before that time, including the 2020 election, in Delaware, if you wanted to cast your ballot before the election—like you can in Texas, Georgia, New Jersey, and New York—you couldn't even do it because in President Biden's home State of Delaware, they did not allow early in-person voting until this year.

Well, contrary to what Senator SCHUMER said, these changes are far from reprehensible; they are common sense. You don't hear Senator SCHUMER claim

that Delaware is trying to suppress the right to vote by not having any early in-person voting before this year.

So it is very politically convenient for the majority leader to attack those States where Democrats aren't doing quite so well in the elections because it doesn't align with their goals here.

What are their goals? Well, it is purely partisan political advantage. Our Democratic colleagues have tried to spin this narrative of a blatant attack on the right to vote. How you could make that claim in terms of the historic turnouts in the 2020 election is beyond me.

I will just give you one personal example. When I was last on the ballot in 2014, there were 4.8 million voters. In 2020, when I was next on the ballot—that actually was the last time I was on the ballot, 2020—there were 11.3 million voters. So we more than doubled the number of people who cast their ballot in Texas in 6 years.

And the story could be told in other parts of the country, like Florida and others, where more and more people are voting, which is certainly something we endorse and we embrace. But we also want to make it harder to cheat.

Our colleagues have tried to spin this narrative of voter suppression. But the myth of widespread voter suppression in 2022 is a myth. Well, why is that?

Well, in 1965, Congress passed something called the Voting Rights Act, which was a historic piece of legislation that said you cannot deny people access to the ballot on the basis of race or ethnicity.

And the good news is, over the intervening years, the Voting Rights Act has worked magnificently. In fact, many States that previously were subject to preclearance requirements under the Voting Rights Act because of historic discrimination actually now have greater participation by minorities in their elections than other States that were not so covered.

And right now, the law of the land is, under section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, if any State or political subdivision tried to suppress people's right to vote based on race or ethnicity, they would be sued by the Attorney General, as they should be, and it would be declared illegal.

That law, section 2, has been part of the Voting Rights Act for more than a half a century, and no one is proposing to change it because it has worked exactly the way Congress intended when we passed it in 1965.

The Democrats are falsely claiming assaults on the right to vote for one reason and one reason only, and it is to achieve political ends because the facts simply do not support their arguments or their proposals.

Now, it shouldn't be of any surprise that Republicans don't want to turn over their elections to Washington, DC, and to the Biden Department of Justice. So the path forward for the majority leader is to try to eliminate the 60-

vote requirement known as the filibuster in order to pass legislation.

In his letter earlier this week, Senator SCHUMER concedes that the Senate was designed to protect minority rights, but those rights, he said, have been "warped and contorted to obstruct and embarrass the will of [the] majority."

I can tell you from experience that the majority is always frustrated by the 60-vote cloture requirement known as the filibuster, but it is designed for a very specific purpose. It is designed to force us to do what maybe does not come naturally, which means to work together on a bipartisan basis to build consensus legislation that will stand the test of time.

But what Senator SCHUMER is proposing to do, because we have a 50-50 Senate, is to change the rules so that Democrats, and Democrats alone, can dictate what these new laws will look like. That is it. It is not any more complicated than that.

Senator SCHUMER is frustrated, no doubt, by everything that he and the Democratic colleagues in the Senate have been unable to accomplish, what they have promised and what they have delivered. But this is by his own design. He sets the agenda. He knows if he brings a bill to the floor like the infrastructure bill that passed earlier this year or the national defense authorization bill, that there is broad bipartisan support, and the chances are that they will pass with large bipartisan majorities, as both of those did.

But when they try to jam through things like so-called Build Back Better, which has zero support on the Republican side and actually doesn't even have unanimous support on the Democratic side, it should be no surprise that they are unable to get that passed, as we have seen in recent weeks.

So Senator SCHUMER sets the agenda. If he decides to continue to set the agenda on partisan legislation that doesn't even enjoy majority support of his own political party, he can expect the same results over and over again.

He himself is the reason why the President's agenda has not succeeded because he has given up on bipartisanship and consensus building in a 50-50 Senate.

The reason why it is important to build bipartisan consensus when it comes to legislation is because they will endure no matter what happens in the next election or the next election or the next election. This is good policy so people can plan.

It also assures that the States that elect Senators who happen to be of the minority party will have their views listened to and accommodated, where possible, as part of that consensus-building process.

The filibuster, which the American people probably did not widely hear much about before but have heard a lot about, was designed to ensure that each of these things occurs—bipartisan consensus building, legislation that

will stand the test of time, and legislation that will not change with each fleeting majority. That is what the 60-vote requirement known as the filibuster is designed to address.

Now, what has been so remarkable to me is how Senator SCHUMER's views on the filibuster have changed. Back in 2005, he said eliminating the filibuster would be the "doomsday for democracy." He was in the minority then. He said eliminating the filibuster would be the "doomsday for democracy."

More recently, when it suited his political interests, he argued to protect it and said that we should—well, this is before he was in the majority. He argued that we ought to "build a firewall around the legislative filibuster."

During his days in the Senate, President Biden, who served a long time in this institution, said:

This nuclear option—

That is what he called eliminating the 60-vote requirement to close off debate known as the filibuster.

He said:

This nuclear option is ultimately an example of the arrogance of power. It is a fundamental power grab by the majority party.

That is what he called what Senator SCHUMER is trying to do today. He called it "the arrogance of power," and he called it "a fundamental power grab by the majority party."

Our friends across the aisle used the filibuster numerous times to block majority-proposed legislation when they were in the minority. They filibustered countless bills on everything from pandemic relief to police reform.

Now, when it is politically convenient and expedient, they flip-flop. They have gone from defending this consensus-building rule to declaring it public enemy No. 1.

I could use a lot of examples, but I will just use this one from our colleague Senator DURBIN, the majority whip.

Just a few years ago, Senator DURBIN, a distinguished Member of this body and part of the Democratic leadership, said that if the filibuster were eliminated, it "would be the end of the Senate as it was originally devised and created going back to our Founding Fathers." That was just in 2018.

Last year, he said the filibuster is "not the guarantor of democracy. It has become the death grip of democracy."

I guess we can be forgiven if we get whiplash trying to reconcile those two conflicting positions in a short period of 3 years.

The truth is, this isn't about some noble endeavor saving our democracy. This isn't about just policy differences. This is about gaining permanent partisan political advantage by nationalizing our State-run election laws, which, by the way, I believe would be unconstitutional.

Democrats simply think it is in their best interest to eliminate the 60-vote consensus-building rule and to secure an easy path for legislation, and that may be true—for now.

But what we have learned from hard experience is that there are inherent consequences to changing rules in a place where your power, where your majority is never guaranteed. Elections happen. Majorities come and go. Presidents change political parties.

In less than a year's time, Republicans could hold the majority in either or both Chambers. In 3 years, a Republican could be in the White House as well.

Ask yourself this: Would our Democratic colleagues still support eliminating the filibuster were that to occur? If Republicans were in the majority in the House and the Senate and there was a Republican in the White House, would they support eliminating the filibuster? Not on your life. Would they believe that the minority party should be silenced, as they apparently are arguing for now? Not on your life.

We don't have to speculate on hypotheticals because we have seen this scenario before. Less than a decade ago, our Democratic colleagues went "nuclear." That is using the terminology that President Biden used when he was in the Senate, the "nuclear option"—the rule change to breaking the rules in order to change the rules.

Less than a decade ago, Democrats went "nuclear" and eliminated the 60-vote threshold for judicial nominees. This was a precedent that they themselves had established. At the time, Leader MCCONNELL said—who has been here for a while, who has seen majorities come and majorities go—he said:

You will regret this, and you may regret this a lot sooner than you think.

Unsurprisingly, he was right. Under the previous administration, a Republican-led Senate, with a Republican in the White House, confirmed more than 230 Federal judges—all thanks to the Democrats' nuclear option rule change.

If Senator SCHUMER were able to convince Senator MANCHIN and Senator SINEMA to blow up the Senate and to break the rules, along with others—and that is a big if—it might clear the way for the legislation they want right now. But when the balance of power shifts, as it surely will, this rule change they are proposing today could make it easier for Republicans to pass legislation that our Democratic colleagues simply abhor—legislation that protects the right to life, legislation that secures the border and controls illegal immigration, legislation that balances the Federal budget, protects our Second Amendment rights, or—take your pick—any other changes Democrats would certainly oppose. That would be possible if they were to get their way temporarily.

Now, I have heard this argument about, well, this is just going to be a carve-out. There is no such thing as a carve-out under the Senate's rules and precedents. This would be applied broadly and allow Republicans to turn the tables and to pass legislation Democrats dislike by a simple majority if they were to eliminate the 60-vote filibuster requirement.

The truth is that in the Senate, the shoe is always on the other foot, eventually, which is why no party has ever been so shortsighted as to eliminate the legislative filibuster in the history of the U.S. Senate.

Fortunately, the Senate is designed to allow for deliberation and debate, and cooler heads usually prevail. I hope the Senators who, along with Senator MANCHIN and Senator SINEMA, will remain steadfast—and I do believe there are other Senators who are of similar views, that it would be shortsighted and foolish to eliminate the filibuster, but simply haven't attracted attention to themselves and let Senator MANCHIN and Senator SINEMA take all the slings and arrows. But I hope those who oppose changes in the legislative filibuster will remain steadfast in their opposition to such a dangerous change.

A completely partisan overhaul of America's elections is hardly an effective way to improve public confidence in our elections. It is just the opposite. A partisan change in our election laws, by nationalizing them, won't lead to improved public trust or more secured elections. It is a recipe for fraud, abuse, and partisan distrust.

This rules change in the legislation would fast-track and may make some activists in the Democratic base happy, but it would instill lasting instability and distrust in our institutions, including our elections.

I would simply encourage our Democratic colleagues to reconsider their current position based on their past position and to consider the grave consequences before leading our country down this dangerous path.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF LATE SENATOR JOHN "JOHNNY" HARDY ISAKSON

Mr. WARNOCK. Madam President, I come to the floor today to honor a friend, our late Senator from Georgia, my predecessor, Senator Johnny Isakson.

I mourn this great loss with the rest of Georgia and people all across our Nation, and since his passing, I know I have joined many of you in reflecting on the countless memories and moments that we shared with Johnny Isakson.

Without a doubt, Senator Isakson cared deeply for Georgia, and he cared deeply for our country. He was a patriot, a public servant, and there are members of my staff, I am proud to say, who used to work for Johnny, and they will tell you that he never hesitated to show up.

I often talk in my other job about the ministry of presence. Sometimes, half a job is to show up, and he knew how to show up for people, whether it was paying a visit to an ill patient, the ill parent of a staffer, or seeing a disabled veteran.